

July 11, 2003

Ms. Teri Murrison,
Watershed Coordinator
East Merced Resource Conservation District
c/o 14579 Avenida Central
La Grange, California 95329

Mr. Bob Neale
Sustainable Conservation
121 2nd Street, 6th Floor
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Ms. Murrison and Mr. Neale:

I am writing regarding the Central Valley Training for BMP Related Permit Coordination in Priority Watersheds project concept proposal recently submitted to the State Water Resource Control Board by the East Merced Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The San Joaquin River Management Program, established by State Legislation AB 3603 in September 1990, provides a public forum to identify problems and solutions for wildlife, flood protection, water quality, water supply, fisheries, and recreation issues. In February 1995, SJRMP submitted to the legislature a river management plan that recommended or supported various projects or programs to address these issues.

The SJRMP Advisory Council was presented with a summary of EMRCD's concept proposal at its June 25th meeting in Modesto, and had an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The written concept proposal has also been posted on the SJRMP website. It is our understanding that the project is proposing a coordinated permit process with the involvement of Central Valley Resource Conservation Districts, the National Resource Conservation Service, and state and federal regulatory agencies that will remove a significant barrier to voluntary conservation efforts by farmers, ranchers and private landowners and will result in a significant increase in local capacity for RCDs and other providers of technical assistance and cost sharing programs. These activities are similar to projects or programs recommended in the 1995 plan and can advance water quality, wildlife, fisheries, and recreation improvements on the San Joaquin River.

Based on the June 25, 2003 presentation, the SJRMP Advisory Council has agreed that the proposed project is consistent with SJRMP's goals and adheres to the SJRMP principle that impacts resulting from the action are acceptable to other interests.

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If you have any questions, please contact Paula J. Landis at (559) 230-3310.

Sincerely,

Timothy Ramirez, Chair
San Joaquin River
Management Program
Advisory Council